

Travelers in Montana search for new and deep cultural experiences — aesthetically, intellectually, and emotionally. Preserving and promoting our cultural resources and investing in our communities' quality of life are the keys to expanding Montana's tourism market. support the heritage tourism initiatives embodied in this bill. Monies generated through this 1% increase to the lodging facilities tax would fund Montana's tourism promotion and heritage and historic preservation grants. These bricks and mortar grants would improve the cultural infrastructure, provide jobs, and facilitate cultural tourism.

Recognizing that Montana's people and places are linked by tourism and that future visitors are necessary for our economic survival, it now more than ever important to join together to support this plan. This bill will encourage economic development by enhancing Montana's tourism marketing and tourism development effort. It will also preserve and restore the rich cultural heritage of Montana.

Tourism is a powerful economic development tool. Tourism creates jobs, provides new business opportunities and strengthens local economies. When paired with an authentic cultural experience, it also helps to protect our state's natural and cultural treasures and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Linking tourism with heritage and culture can do more for local economies than promoting them separately. That's the core idea in cultural heritage tourism: save your heritage and your culture, share it with visitors, and reap the economic benefits of tourism.

Cultural heritage tourism and rehabilitation projects can have a tremendous economic impact on local economies. To economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values, tourism adds less tangible—but equally important—payoffs. A well-managed tourism program improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the services and attractions tourism adds. It promotes community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry.

An area that develops its potential and infrastructure for cultural heritage tourism creates new opportunities for tourists to gain an understanding of an unfamiliar place, people or time. With the arrival of visitors in turn come new opportunities for preservation. Well-interpreted sites teach visitors their importance, and by extension, the importance of preserving other such sites elsewhere.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of cultural heritage tourism is that opportunities increase for diversified economies, ways to prosper economically while holding on to the characteristics that make communities special.